

FACT SHEET

BONELESS BREAST OF CHICKEN

David B. Mellor and James H. Denton*

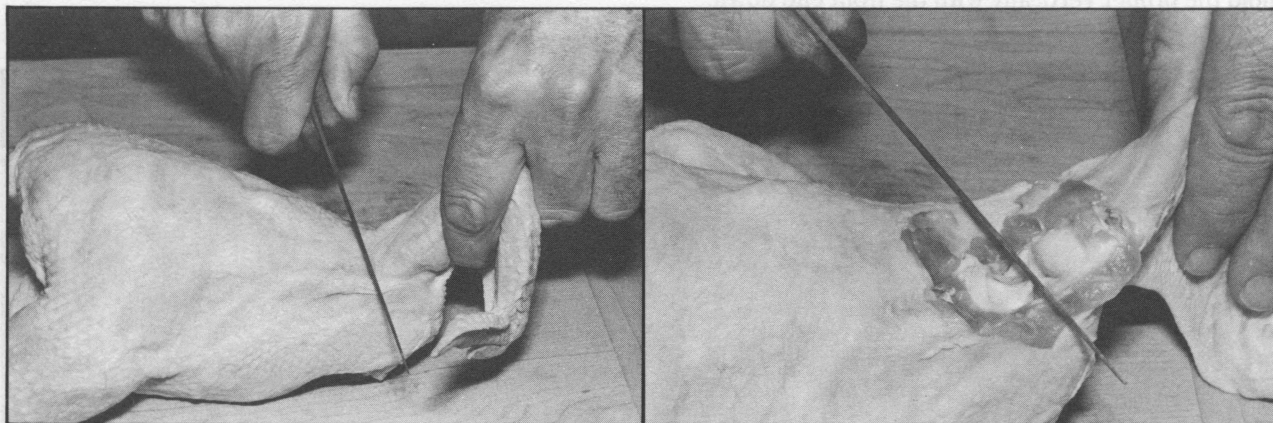
Gourmet dishes made from boneless breast of chicken are the basis of a delicious meal, whether for company or for family. It is easy to remove the breast from a broiler and to use the rest of the broiler for regular cut-up. The breast section can be frozen ahead of time and then later thawed, boned, stuffed and cooked just in time for your gourmet meal.

Never debone or stuff a chicken breast and then freeze or store it. Always prepare it for immediate consumption.

Any stuffing can be used in the boneless breast. Use your favorite stuffing recipe or any of the prepared stuffing mixes available in supermarkets.

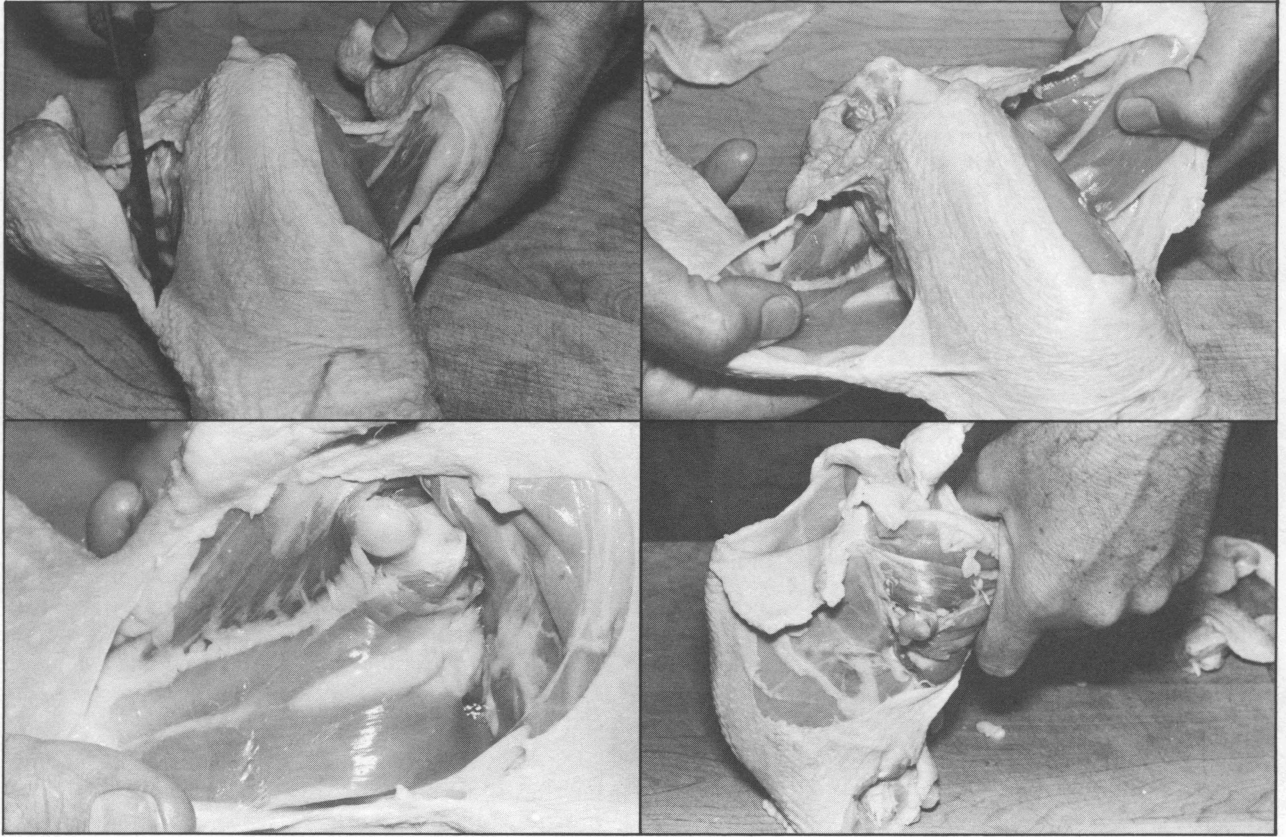
Before the breast can be cut from a whole chicken, the wings must be removed and the legs disjointed. Detailed instructions for these procedures are given in Extension publications L-1798 *Chicken Cut-up: Family Style* and L-1799 *Chicken Cut-up: Commercial Style*.

Always use a sharp, 5 or 6 inch, rigid bladed knife for these procedures. Also use a cutting board that provides plenty of work surface. Keep the board and working area clean. Before starting, rinse the chicken thoroughly and allow it to drain. Then work quickly, while the chicken is still cold. This makes the cutting easier and prevents bacterial buildup.



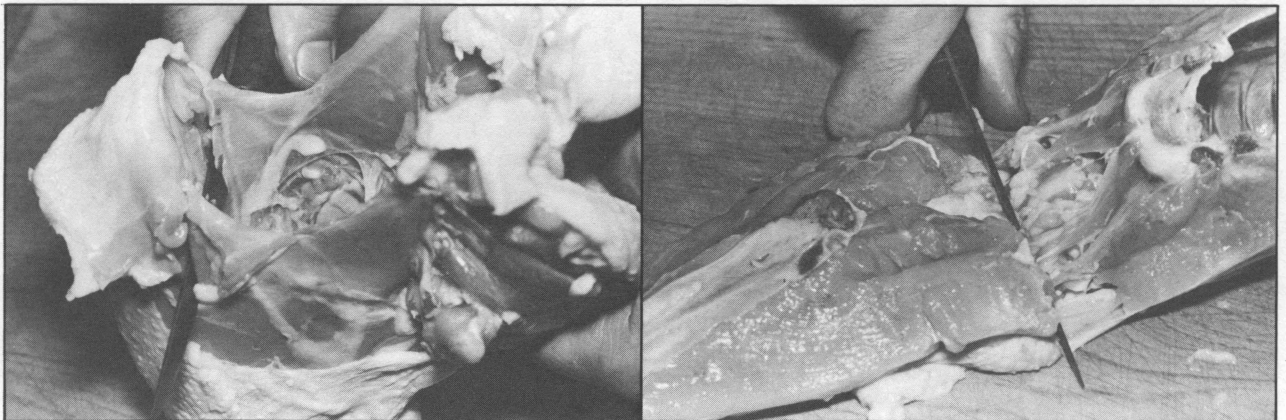
To start, place the chicken on its side and cut slowly into the wing pit. Pulling the wing upward, cut through the cartilage and joint. As the joint separates, turn the knife slightly toward the wing tip to avoid cutting the breast muscle. This cut can be angled to add meat from the wing onto the breast. All cuts should be made gently so that if you accidentally hit a bone you can stop and find the joint. Remove the other wing the same way.

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Next, cut the skin between the leg and breast, leaving as much skin as possible along the breast.

Using both your hands, hold each leg with your thumb across the knee and your fingers across the back of the hip joint. Gently force the legs back until the hip joints dislocate. Fold both legs back; using them as a handle, hold the broiler vertically with the front end down.

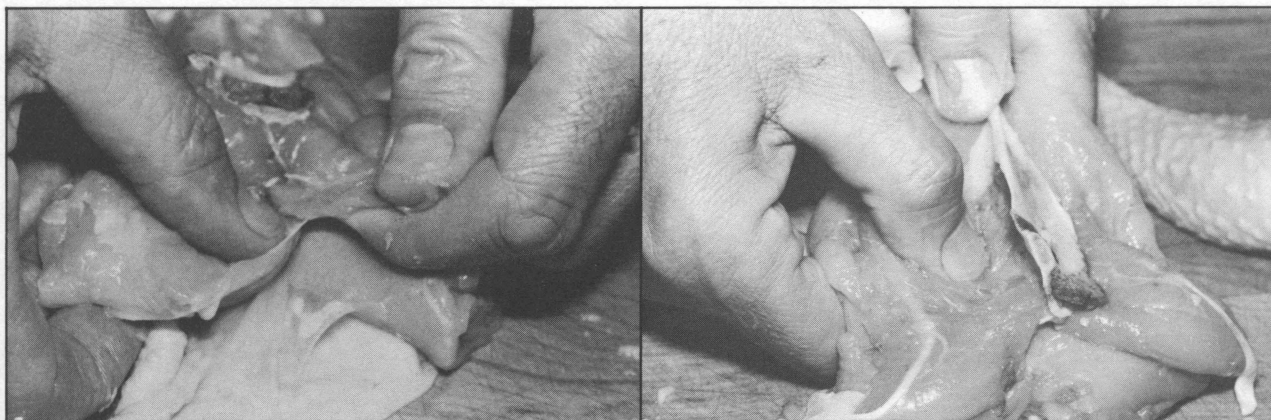


Locate the two long bones that extend up from the front of the breast on either side. Cut down along the breastbone side of the bones and into the white cartilage at the point of the breastbone. As you cut through the cartilage, turn the knife slightly down toward the cutting board. At the same time, turn the chicken on its back. Cut along the collarbones, using them as a guide, to the joint of the collarbone and the wishbone (pulleybone). Use the knife to turn the cut section forward and to cut through the two joints. Cut the remaining skin and separate the breast from the rest of the bird.

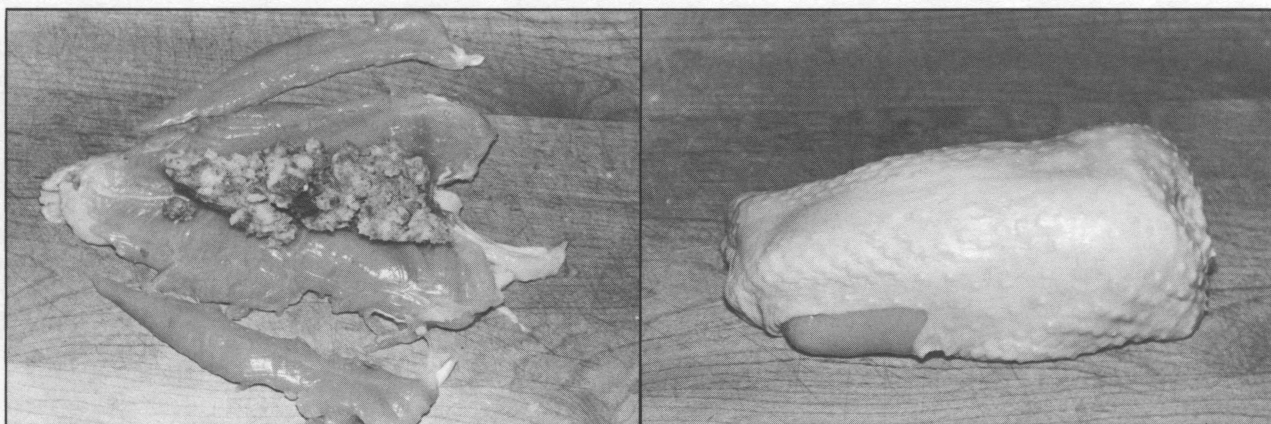
This breast section can be frozen for future use. Never bone and stuff the breast until immediately before it is to be cooked and eaten.

The rest of the chicken can be cut up, packaged and frozen. The breast section described here corresponds with two sections of the family style cut-up described in *Chicken Cut-up: Family Style*. If you are cutting up several chickens and want to save breast sections for future meals, they can be packaged and frozen at this stage.

To debone the breast, two bones must be removed from the meat; the breastbone (sternum or keel) and the wishbone (pulleybone). These can be extracted with your fingers, using a knife only to cut stubborn connective tissue at the front of the breastbone.



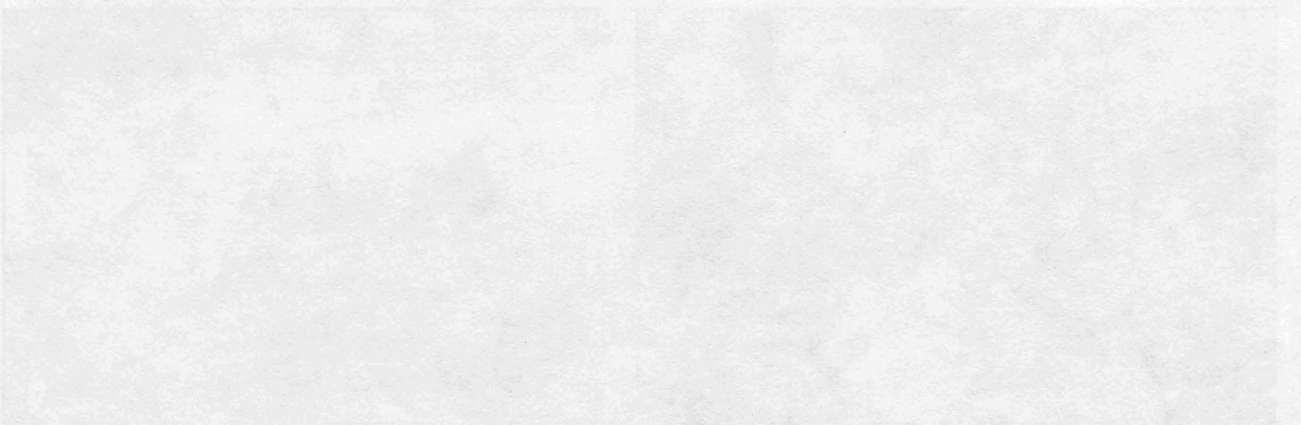
Remove the wishbone first by working the meat away from the bone at the exposed joint area. Continue working the meat loose and pull the wishbone out. Sometimes the bone breaks into two or more pieces so be sure all of the bone is removed. To extract the breastbone, run your thumb down each side of the bone to loosen the meat. When the meat is loose, hold the breast down with one hand and pull the bone from the meat with the other. It may be necessary to free the meat at the point of the breastbone with a knife. Do not cut through the meat and be sure all of the breastbone and cartilage is removed.



Place the boned breast on the cutting board, skin side down. Gently lay back the two small breast muscles to the side of the large muscles. Fill the exposed cavity with about 2 tablespoons of stuffing and fold the two small muscles back over the stuffing. Add any extra seasonings before stuffing and cooking the breast. Carefully roll the whole breast over and stretch the skin across the breast as much as possible. Tuck or cut away excess skin. Pins or toothpicks can be used to hold the skin or to attach bacon or other flavoring foods around the breast.

Place the breast in a shallow baking pan or a cooking sheet with sides high enough to retain the fat and moisture from the meat. Cook for about 45 minutes at 375 degrees F.

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